

May 2023

ESSENTIALS

SERIES OVERVIEW

This May, our message series will look the *Essentials* we need to thrive in our walk with Jesus. We will be thinking about big ideas and how what we believe shapes our everyday lives.

- **7th May: In God's Image**
What does it mean to be created in the image of God?
 - **14th May: Faith**
How do we grow as a faith filled community and faith filled individuals?
 - **21st May: Forgiven**
What is our understanding of forgiveness?
 - **28th May: Baptised in the Spirit**
How can I live a Spirit filled life?
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May 2023

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SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE: 7th May 2023

DISCUSSION TOPIC: In God's Image

BIBLE PASSAGES: Genesis 1:26-28, Genesis 9:6 and Colossians 1:15 and 3:9-10

THE BIG IDEA

We are created in the image of God.

Satan hates the image of God and wants to pervert & destroy it.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the image of God like? What are the first words or pictures that come to mind when we ask you to describe God?
 2. In what way does Jesus show us in humanity the image of God?. (Colossians 1).
 3. What is the image of God in you? What diminishes the image of God in your spiritual struggle? How do we recognise the sacredness of the image of God in everyone, and call out the image of God even in people who seem most broken? How do you walk out bearing the image of God in your daily life and spiritual formation?
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May 2023

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SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE: 14th May 2023

DISCUSSION TOPIC: Faith

BIBLE PASSAGES: Hebrews 11:6 and Romans 4

THE BIG IDEA

Faith is how we access a relationship with a Holy God.

Ultimately faith is faith in God as saviour.

QUESTIONS

1. The Greek word for faith is pistis. It is the same word used to describe a spiritual gift in 1 Corinthians 12, and spiritual fruit in Galatians 5. What is the difference between a gift of faith and the fruit of faith.
 2. What does it mean when the Bible describes faith as 'counted as righteousness'?
 3. Jesus commented on people's faith, or lack of it, often. How can we grow in faith?
 4. Faith is often contested. How is your faith being contested now? What will help you in that struggle? Can faith and doubt co-exist?
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May 2023

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SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE: 21st May 2023

DISCUSSION TOPIC: Forgiven

BIBLE PASSAGES: Psalm 103:4, Matthew 6:12, Luke 5:20-23, John 20:23 and Acts 2:38 and 26:18.

THE BIG IDEA

Forgiveness is the outworking of the grace of God that is fundamental to our Christian faith. We need to experience and know we are forgiven- to understand our sin and need, which stimulates our love for God and gratitude for his mercy. But we offer to the world a message of forgiveness, not condemnation. We have a calling to proclaim this forgiveness.

QUESTIONS

1. What is our understanding of forgiveness in a culture that believes in determinism? Can we be forgiven if behaviour is driven purely by circumstances of life?
 2. How do we navigate the challenge of forgiving someone without shaming someone? How do we talk about sin and forgiveness to our contemporary culture without alienating people?
 3. Is retrospective forgiveness possible or helpful (e.g. generations seeking forgiveness for what their forbears did in the slave trade. Forgiving someone who hurt you who is now deceased)?
 4. How does unforgiveness to humans affect our relationship with God?
 5. How in practice are we walking out forgiveness in our Church community and as a lifestyle?
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SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE: 28th May 2023

DISCUSSION TOPIC: Baptised in the Holy Spirit

BIBLE PASSAGES: Acts 1:4-8 and Acts 2

THE BIG IDEA

The baptism in the Spirit is an empowering.

We may well have encountered the Spirit, but we need power for witness.

QUESTIONS

1. Jesus told his disciples in Acts 1 that in a few days they would be baptised with the Holy Spirit. What do you think their experience of the Holy Spirit was before that?
 2. Jesus' ministry was characterised by authority and power. When he sent out the apostles in Luke 9:1 he gave them both these endowments. Can they be separated?
 3. The Baptism in the Spirit seems to be intended for everyone. Can you think of times in the book of Acts when this did not happen? How did the apostles respond to these incidents?
 4. What conditions help us be filled with Spirit?
 5. What place does laying on of hands have in people being baptised in the Spirit?
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